



2 Bobby Green Plaza
Auburndale, FL 33823

July 24, 2023

Auburndale Police Department News Release

Media Contact:

Chief Terry J. Storie

863-965-5555

tstorie@auburndalefl.com

Robbery with a Firearm

On July 24, 2023, at about 0100 hours, members of the Auburndale Police Department (APD) responded to the Walmart located at 2120 U.S. Highway 92 West regarding an in-progress armed robbery.

Upon arrival, APD officers learned the victim arranged to meet the suspects to sell them a cell phone. During the transaction, one of the suspects produced a handgun and held it to the victim's head and chest stating, "I will kill you" and forcefully stole the cell phone.

The victim was able to provide very good descriptions of the vehicle, the firearm, the suspects, and a partial tag number. Investigation through law enforcement technology indicated the suspects may have been going toward Davenport, and all information was immediately shared with the Polk County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) and the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP). PCSO observed the vehicle on Interstate 4 (I4) eastbound near exit 55. A traffic stop was conducted by PCSO without incident.

The victim was taken to the traffic stop on I4 and positively identified the two suspects. The firearm and the victim's cellular phone were recovered from the vehicle.

APD detectives have charged Pedro Pablo Rivera (H/M, DOB: 02/26/2002) from Orlando, FL with robbery with a firearm, a life felony, and felony petit theft. Also charged in this case is Maria Velazquez-Almanza (H/F, DOB: 01/16/2004) also from Orlando, FL with robbery with a firearm, a life felony, improper exhibition of a firearm, and petit theft.

As a result of their traffic stop, PCSO has charged Rivera with possession of ammunition by a convicted felon, possession of cannabis under 20 grams, and possession of drug paraphernalia. PCSO charged Velazquez-Almanza with six additional misdemeanors for traffic and cannabis possession related charges.

As a reminder, APD suggests business transactions with unfamiliar people should take place during business hours, and even consider making such transactions in the police department lobby or other such location in public view.

Terry J. Storie
Chief of Police
Auburndale Police Department

Professional Police Service

The Auburndale Police Department is accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc.
Chief of Police Terry J. Storie